

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia: Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 180, the National Blue Alert Act. H.R. 180 will establish a coordinator within the Department of Justice to facilitate the issuance of Blue Alerts to help apprehend individuals suspected of killing or seriously injuring police officers. I support the bill because it provides critical support for a system that protects police officers and the public.

It's particularly timely that we consider this measure during National Police Week. National Police Week is a special occasion during which we recognize law enforcement officers and honor those who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

Since the first known line-of-duty death in 1791, more than 1,900 U.S. law enforcement officers have made the ultimate sacrifice. Today, there are more than 900,000 sworn law enforcement officers serving in the United States and, regrettably, on average one is killed in the line of duty every 57 hours.

Currently, 15 States, including my home State of Virginia, have Blue Alert systems that use media broadcasts and roadside message signs to disseminate, within their respective borders, time-sensitive information about those suspected of killing or seriously injuring Federal, State, or local law enforcement officers. In addition to those States, two more States are establishing Blue Alert systems this year.

The information disseminated by these systems--which can include descriptions of the suspect, the vehicle, and the license plate number--enables the public to assist the police in locating these perpetrators. H.R. 180 will enable more States to institute these valuable programs and require the Department of Justice to facilitate the dissemination of Blue Alerts across State lines and throughout specific geographic areas.

The Blue Alert program is similar to the Amber Alert program that helps us find missing children, and it makes sense that we would encourage similar expansion for the Blue Alert programs.

Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to support this important public safety measure.